



Phoebe R. Donaldson.

1908

heavy, Pl. 366
"Desertus" ^{all} "Parvirostris" "Praecox"
"Very interesting"

Birkenhead
Literary & Scientific Society.

SESSION XXXI, 1887-88.

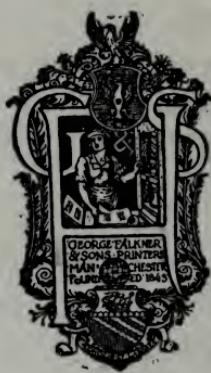


Engravers &
Engraving.



*Being the Inaugural Address, delivered at the
commencement of the Session, by*

F R A N C I S V C A C H E R,
PRESIDENT.



GEORGE TALMUD
& SONS LTD
MANUFACTURERS
OF CHESS

London 1945



Contents.

	PAGE.
NOTE.	
INTRODUCTORY	I
WOOD ENGRAVING	II
ENGRAVING IN THE DOT MANNER (<i>la Gravure en Crible</i>)	25
LINE ENGRAVING	29
CHIARO-OSCURO	47
ETCHING	51
SOFT-GROUND ETCHING	69
DRY-POINT ETCHING	73
MEZZOTINT	77
AQUATINT	85
STIPPLE	89
BLAKE'S MANNER	97
CONCLUDING REMARKS	101





Plates.*

FACE
PAGE.

WOOD ENGRAVING - - - - -	17
"Christ Washing the Disciples' Feet," from the <i>Little Passion</i> , by <i>Dürer</i> .	
NIELLO - - - - -	34
" Pax,"—Coronation of the Virgin, by <i>Finiguerra</i> .	
LINE ENGRAVING - - - - -	38
" Musica," by <i>H. S. Beham</i> .	
ETCHING - - - - -	65
" Rembrandt's Old Mother," by <i>Rembrandt</i> .	
STIPPLE ENGRAVING - - - - -	94
" Miniature Portrait of Dean Swift," by <i>Hopwood</i> .	

*These five Plates have been reproduced in Collotype,
and are in every respect, size included, fac-similes of the
originals.





Note.

LHIS Address is printed as delivered. That is to say, although the exhibition of prints at the Waverley Rooms is a thing of the past, the references to these prints are retained. The issue of the Address is not for the public, but merely for the members of a private society, all of whom had an opportunity of seeing what was shown as well as hearing what was said. Without thus keeping up the fiction of an exhibition, the point of the Address would be lost ; indeed, the display of the works of many masters was not designed to illustrate the Address, but as a local exhibition that could not but be full of interest. The Address was merely the collector's explanation of how engravings are produced, and some comments on the examples shown.

F. V.

October 22nd 1887.



गुरुवारी

Introductory.

the intellectual athlete convinces us, and we yield assent; but the artist comes with his gift of imaginative expression, and we are his at once, recognising in his ideals a reflection of what is within us, and that through him we have found utterance for the ineffable tenderness and love of nature and beauty which lies at the heart's core. And what is true of educated men and women is no less true of the uneducated; for even the most abject and neglected, who are empty in mind and heart and life, to whom literature says nothing, and science reveals nothing, are reached and touched by the magic of art.

Painting is of all the fine arts the one which exercises the widest influence. It creates an intelligent sympathy between remote communities, and reveals the inner life of the generation producing it to sequent generations. It grasps all, and is understood of all, the only limit being the measure of the insight of artist and beholder.

Indeed,

Indeed, speaking for the people, "art" means "pictorial art." If one enters a so-called "exhibition of the fine arts" in almost any provincial town, what is on view? Paintings and water-color drawings! The other fine arts are conspicuous by their absence, except sculpture, which may be feebly represented by an effigy of the Queen, or the bust of a local magnate by a local artist. Seeing then that for all practical purposes, as far as this country is concerned, the fine arts mean pictures, how are the fine arts to be encouraged, and their great influence for good exercised to the fullest extent? Not by multiplying small local collections of artists' work, which, however pretty and promising, are unsatisfying. Not even by schools of art, useful as those are in their way, for many who are apt to see have no skill to draw. The one sure way is by bringing all classes of the community, so far as we may be able, face to face with the compositions of the great masters, ancient and modern. This

cannot

cannot be accomplished directly, for the great masters' pictures are dispersed in all lands, many are inaccessible, many have been lost or damaged, and some, like the beautiful "Last Supper" of Leonardo, were painted as mural decorations, and are fast disappearing. It can be accomplished indirectly by means of copies. Now copies in oil would cost too much, and to be really useful should be done by a master almost as great as the original painter, and copies by any of the mechanical processes for printing in colours (oleographs, chromo-lithographs, &c.), are but mechanical copies, hard and spiritless. In engraving, and engraving alone, is there presented a solution to this difficult problem—how to make the creations of the great masters accessible to the multitude. The great engravers have entered into the spirit of the great masters (many of whom have been original engravers as well as painters), so that the best engravings handed down

from

from the past, and some of quite recent date, are neither deficient in vigour nor lacking in the finer characteristics for which the original paintings have been prized. The light and shade, breadth, tone and feeling, and life of the picture are preserved—nay, even the colour is suggested or plainly indicated. Thus, what is true of the pictures is true of the engravings; that they are capable of bringing comfort and solace, or revealing to us something within ourselves, of educating and stirring up to action.

I hold therefore that of all the topics coming under the heading of fine arts, which might be selected for consideration, there is none having better claims on our attention than the subject I have chosen.

“Engraving” has been correctly defined as “picturing by incisions in any manner,” the root of the word as you all know being *grapho*, “I cut.” Under the general

term

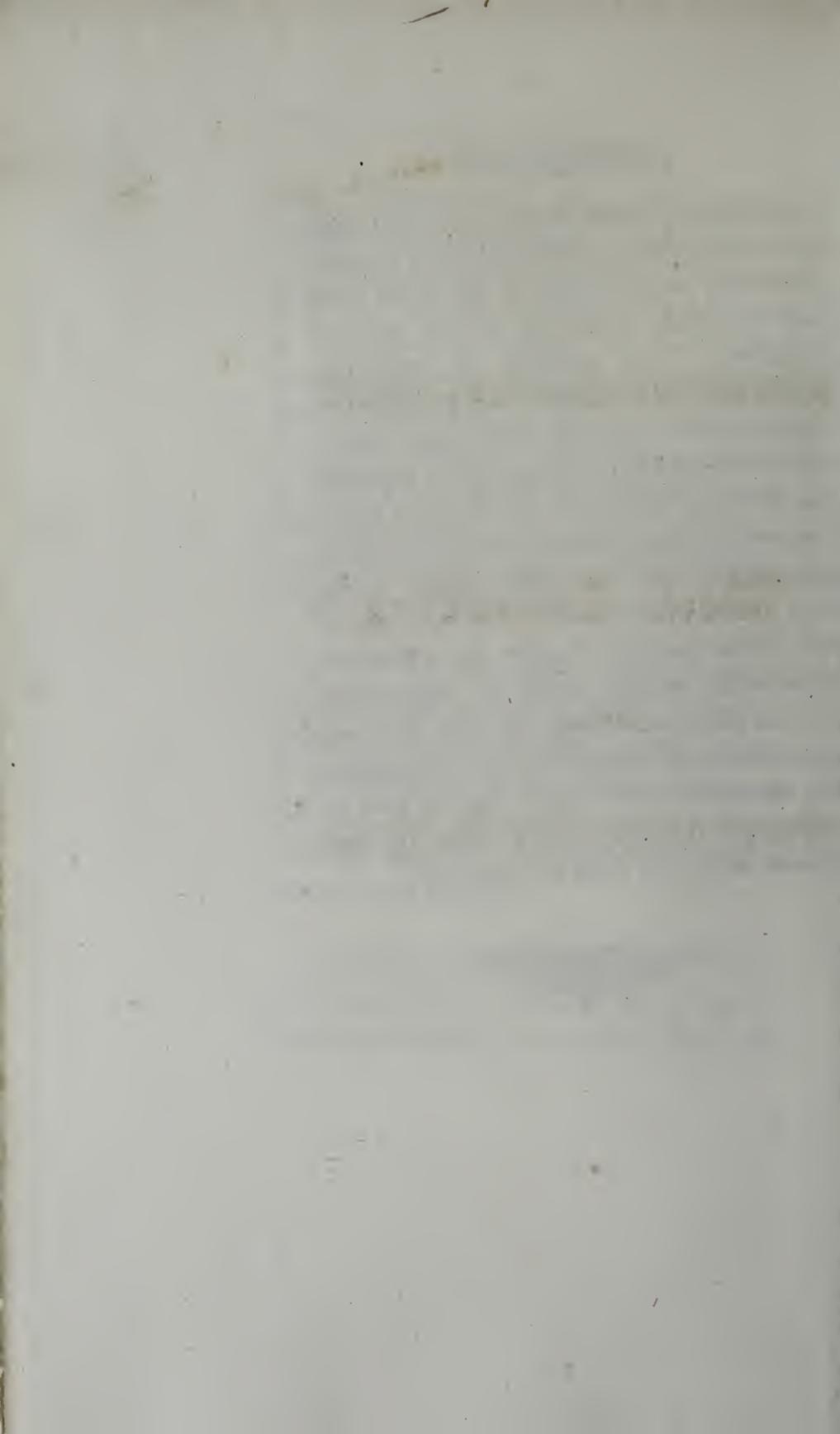
term “Engraving,” may therefore be included gem engraving, the chasing of precious metals, wood carving, &c., but for our purpose this evening it is convenient to limit the meaning of the word, and comprehend only processes by which the skilled artist produces blocks or plates to be used in printing. The most important of these processes are engraving on wood, and line engraving, etching, mezzotint engraving, and stipplings on copper or steel, or rarely on other metals.

In all such engraving the work is reversed; that is contrary to the manner in which impressions from the engraved plates or blocks are seen, so that in copying a drawing, the engraver copies not the drawing itself but the image of it as it appears in a mirror.

I purpose now to describe the various processes, taking them (so far as my information enables me to do) in the order

in which they were discovered ; and after the description of each process to remark, necessarily very briefly, on the work done and the chief workers, in the manner described. Some methods of engraving, as the early dot manner, are so imperfect there is little need be said about them ; while other methods possess such capabilities that they have been practised by many masters in many schools, and the space at my disposal will not admit of my doing bare justice to the record. My main object will be to indicate clearly the difference between the various kinds of engravings, so that those who hear me and have an opportunity of examining and comparing the examples on the walls, may be able to distinguish between work done by one process and work done by another.



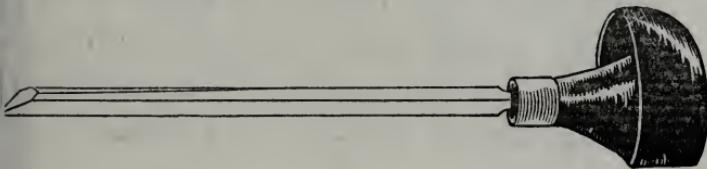


Wood Engraving.



Wood Engraving.

 In wood engraving the subject is drawn on the wood block with a pencil, and the parts left blank are then cut away. Thus the whole design is left in relief. To obtain a print, an inked roller is passed over the face of the block, and moistened paper pressed upon it, as in



ordinary

ordinary letterpress printing. I pass round an engraved wood block (commonly called a "cut"), which is interesting as being one of Geo. Cruikshank's early designs. Such blocks are made of boxwood, cut sectionally. I also show a graver, tint-tool, and gouge, as now used by wood engravers. Tint-tools are for cutting lines of any breadth. All incisions are now made with a forward or pushing motion. In the early period of the art the wood used was softer than box, as pear-tree wood, and in the plank. An instrument like a long-bladed desk knife was principally employed, the operator making his incisions by drawing the blade towards him.

The discoverer of wood engraving, and of the art of printing or stamping in ink from engraved blocks, is not known. Stamps were made and used in Europe in the twelfth century, and probably earlier in China. If these stamps be excepted, some of the earliest examples of printing from

wood

wood blocks are furnished by playing cards. Next come block books—many are still preserved in the British Museum—the pages of which are printed from wood blocks having subjects engraved on them. The impressions were obtained by laying paper on the inked surface and rubbing the back of the paper with an instrument made for the purpose. However, the earliest specimen of an impression from a wood block, regarding the date of which there is no doubt, is a representation of St. Christopher carrying the infant Saviour over a stream. The date on the face of the block is 1423. The copy I show is an exact representation of the cut. The drawing of the figures is good, that of the landscape quite conventional. The art appears to have made no great progress in the fifteenth century. The blocks of the "Biblia Pauperum," probably executed about 1460, are neither better nor worse than St. Christopher. The illustrations of the "Speculum Humanæ Salvationis," a

sort

sort of Christian handbook, would appear to indicate that the art was early practised in Holland ; and many prints witness to the industry of the Flemish wood engravers of this time. I especially desire to draw attention to the series of woodcuts illustrating Brandt's "Ship of Fools." The method of cutting the blocks is inartistic, but the designs are admirable, and as pictures of contemporary manners most interesting. The cuts exhibited are facsimiles from the originals as they appear in the Basle edition of the Latin "*denuo sedulogue revisa*," issued under Brandt's own supervision in 1497. The advances made by wood engraving in the sixteenth century are due mainly to the influence of Albrecht Dürer and his school. Though born in 1471, Dürer was a master in so many arts (being, according to Sandrart, painter, carver, architect, and engraver), his earliest woodcuts were probably not executed till 1498.* The cuts to which I

* I assume that the sixteen designs known as the *Apocalypse of St. John* were the artist's earliest work on wood.

direct



direct your attention are the "Little Passion," the "Greater Passion," and the "Life of the Virgin." The thirty-seven cuts known as the "Little Passion," all 5in. by $3\frac{7}{8}$ in. (except the title, which is a vignette), form a complete pictorial scheme of Christian history—the first representing Adam and Eve taking the apple, the last, Christ seated for Judgment. The series of the "Greater Passion," twelve in number, each 15in. by $10\frac{3}{4}$ in., is probably a work of earlier date, though published in the same year as the "Little Passion." The prints are of unequal merit, the one I have selected, "The Mocking," being a good example—Christ is presented to the Jews, who disclaim Him, calling out "Crucify Him." The "Life of the Virgin," a series of twenty beautiful designs, was also published in the same year as the two Passions, but the date of its production is uncertain. The one I have selected to show is entitled "The Marriage of Joseph and Mary." Compare with these noble designs the

very large cut known as "The Bath"—the inferiority is not a little remarkable.* Lucas Cranach's wood engravings being not so numerous as Dürer's, are much sought after, but they are rarely equal to his. His subjects, even religious ones, are treated in a fanciful way, not unusual at this period. About the same date are the so-called "Bible Prints," executed by Hans Burgmair, and signed H. B. The composition is generally good, but the costume of the figures is that of the artist's own time.

Next to Dürer's, the most notable cuts of the sixteenth century are Hans Holbein's series, the "Dance of Death." No works are so well known, and few have been so

* The question whether Dürer himself cut his blocks, or merely drew the designs, is not material; it was first raised by Bartsch. Judging by the Little Passion alone, there is so much difference in the method of cutting different blocks, it seems certain Dürer must have obtained some assistance. However, that Dürer was an expert wood carver is beyond doubt. Probably he drew the designs on the wood, occasionally—only occasionally—cutting them himself, and that so much of the cutting as he entrusted to his pupils was done under his own immediate supervision. A similar question has arisen with reference to Holbein's "Dance of Death;" one of the series is initialed H. L., and on this ground chiefly some authorities have concluded that the whole of the blocks were cut by Hans Lützelburger. The truth is that most of the great masters had many able pupils, and freely availed themselves of their service, still supervising the pupils' work, and, when necessary, correcting it.

frequently

frequently copied. The forty-one cuts of the Lyons edition are shown—a description is not needed.

I call attention now to a number of cuts, the date of which is probably twenty years later than Holbein's series. One, William Tell, shooting at the apple on his son's head, is 5in. by 5in., the others are smaller. They are shown as fair examples of cuts in Holbein's day. The distance between his and these is simply immeasurable.

Following these are examples from an Italian artist, who flourished after the time of Holbein. They are illustrations to the four evangelists, by Antonio Tempesta—many of them able designs. That Tempesta must have seen Dürer's Little Passion is manifest. The similarity of the designs of the two artists, representing "Christ Washing the Disciples' Feet," is obvious, while Tempesta's cut, "Nailing Christ on the Cross," is simply a copy of Dürer's, having the same title.

My

My next example is a cut bearing date 1607, probably by an English artist, "The Good Householder." It is a singularly fine cut, both as regards design and engraving.

I have only to mention one more wood engraver who flourished at this period—Christopher Jegher. His best known works are large cuts which he engraved for Rubens, the drawing being made on the block, and the prints published by Rubens himself. I show one of them, representing two children playing with a sheep. Jegher was a skilled draughtsman as well as a wood engraver.

From the beginning of the seventeenth century till past the middle of the eighteenth, wood engraving, as an art practised by artists, declined ; line engraving and etching being more in favour, and taking the place of the earlier art.

The neglect into which wood engraving had fallen was so great that it has been

alleged

alleged by some that the art was actually lost. This, however, is not the case. There is no time at which the art was not represented feebly, yet during this long period the only wood engravers whose names are likely to survive, are the members of the Papillon family, who for three generations displayed skill and zeal, and much industry at their work. The revival of wood engraving, however, owes little to them. Indeed, it is scarcely overstating the truth to say it is due to the genius of one man—Thomas Bewick. I shall not say a word in commendation of the father of modern wood engraving—his works speak for themselves. I submit all of the more important ones, from “The Old Hound,” the wonderful little cut he executed at the age of twenty-two, which gained for him a premium from the Society of Arts, to the large unfinished block representing an old horse, “Waiting for Death,” which the artist worked on a few days before his own decease. In presence

of

of nearly the whole of the life-work of a master, one is reluctant to single out any portion as specially excellent, yet, if an expression of personal opinion (and it is no more) be admissible, I may say that the cuts I derive most pleasure from, and never tire of, are the tail-pieces in the two volumes of the British Birds.

John Bewick, the brother and pupil of the master, showed much talent, and one gift (the gift of drawing graceful figures) which even his teacher lacked. Considering he died at the early age of thirty-five, the amount of work he accomplished is really marvellous. The four books I show as examples of his work, "The Progress of Man in Society," "The Looking Glass for the Mind," "The Blossoms of Morality," and "The Dance of Death," represent the artist adequately. He died on December 5th 1795.

It only remains to place before you a few specimens of the work of four more of

Thomas

Thomas Bewick's pupils—Charlton Nesbit, Luke Clennell, William Harvey, and John Jackson—all of these displayed undoubted talent. Nesbit and Jackson were distinguished engravers, and Clennell and Harvey able designers. Some of the illustrations to Northcote's Fables, which I have here, efficiently represent Nesbit and Jackson at their best; good work by Clennell may be seen in Falconer's "Shipwreck," while Harvey's most famous cuts are those illustrating Lane's "Arabian Nights."

Those interested in wood engraving will find the two following works good authorities:—

Papillon—“Traité de la Gravure en Bois.” 1766.

Jackson—“A Treatise on Wood Engraving, historical and practical.” 1839.



Engraving
In the Dot Manner
(la Gravure en Crible).



Engraving in the Dot Manner

(la Gravure en Crible).

T is not absolutely certain that wood engraving is the oldest method of engraving. If wooden stamps were known at a very early period, so were metal stamps; and if to some of the impressions from wood blocks an earlier date than 1423 is assigned, two relief engravings in metal were recently discovered which are thought to belong to the year 1406. These engravings are in the early dot manner, and, like all plates executed by this special process, are quaint specimens of handicraft rather than sincere expressions of art. Engraving in the dot manner is a form of relief engraving on

metal,

metal, which consisted in rudely punching a design on a plate in dots and short lines. The plate I show, representing Jesus on the Mount of Olives, is perhaps an especially good example of this kind of work. The oldest dotted relief engraving on metal is "St. Bernardino"—the year on it is 1454. It is feeble and stiff, and but for the accident of its being the first dated plate in this style, would have attracted little notice. The date of the plate I show is unknown, but it is probably a few years later than "St. Bernardino."



Line Engraving.



Line Engraving.

INE engraving is an entirely different process. The design is drawn in or traced in outline on a steel or copper plate, with a not very sharp tool called a "dry point." The shadows and modelling of the forms are then worked in with a burin or graver, making a cut which is in section V shaped. Every line intended to appear in black has thus to be laboriously cut in. A slight ridge of metal is forced up on either side, especially from a deep cut, and this (called a "burr") is removed by a scraper. A print is taken by filling in the incised lines with ink, by means of a "dabber," wiping the surface of the plate quite clean, and passing it and the moistened paper intended to receive the impression through a roller press, as in lithographic

printing.

printing. A graver and a small press I have for taking proofs from copper plates is now shown.

It is impossible to speak with absolute certainty either as to the date or the country in which impressions on paper were first taken from engraved metal plates. The Germans and the Italians both claim the credit of the invention, and there are prints from metal plates as early as 1460-65. That impressions could thus be taken from engraved surfaces was found out by enamellers, who little understood the importance of the discovery. The goldsmiths of the middle ages used to chase various designs on plates of silver or other metal, and fill in the chased lines with a black substance, a mixture of lead, silver and copper, made more easily fusible by the addition of a little borax and sulphur. This so-called *nigellum* was put in when in a molten state, and after it had cooled the projecting portion was scraped

down

down and the surface of the plate made quite smooth, the chased lines appearing as a drawing in black on the bright metal. In the fifteenth century this method of enamelling was much in use in Italy, where it acquired the name of *niello*. Maso Finiguerra, a goldsmith of Florence, who lived and worked about 1460, is said to have accidentally made the discovery that he could obtain copies of drawing in *niello*, by placing damp paper upon the plate and passing a wooden roller over it. Impressions thus taken are interesting as the first prints from engraved plates. But goldsmiths also made use of another process for retaining copies of their designs. They formed a mould by covering the chased plate with clay (pressing the clay well into the chased lines), and letting it dry, and from the mould they made a sulphur cast. The lines of the design on the sulphur cast were then filled in with black, which soon hardened. The most celebrated of these

casts reproduces a beautiful design of Finiguerra in *niello*, a little plate representing the coronation of the Virgin. The plate, which is now in the Uffizi, was engraved for the Baptistery of St. John at Florence, as a "pax."* It is said that while working on this plate, which was began in 1450, Finiguerra took the impression which led to the invention of line engraving. A copy of the work is submitted, the exact size of the original. It demands attention more as a perfectly exquisite masterpiece in miniature, than from the interest which attaches to it as the immediate forerunner of a great invention.

For some time, however, the new process appears merely to have been used to take proofs on paper of plates to be afterwards enamelled, and not impressions of plates specially intended to be used for

* According to Littré a pax is the name given to a plate of chased metal, enamelled on *niello*, still used in the solemn feasts of the Agnus Dei. It was called a "pax" because, after it had been kissed by the officiating priest, the acolyte, in presenting it to each of the assisting ecclesiastics, pronounced the words "pax tecum."

printing.



printing. Thus, the earliest known line engravings (not reckoning nielli impressions) are not Florentine but German, being the work of the artist called "the Master of 1466," and Martin Schöngauer. These two indeed were the founders of the German school of engraving. The latter (a very good example of whom is presented) had almost an instinct for beauty, and thus came to be called Martin Schön. The earliest Florentine line engraver was probably Robetta (his date is uncertain); next in point of time came Baldini and Botticelli, both of whom produced plates as early as 1481. Another artist, belonging to the Italian school, Andrea Mantegna, exerted a far greater influence over the art of engraving; his entire engraved work consists of not more than about twenty plates, but all are of the highest order of excellence. "The Entombment," a copy of which is shown, is generally considered his best plate. The most remarkable plates issued in the sixteenth

century

century are Dürer's and Lucas van Leyden's. I show three from the sixteen beautiful miniature prints, forming "The Passion" series, a small plate having no great merit entitled "The Three Peasants," and a striking portrait of Cardinal Archbishop Albert, of Magdeburg. I especially draw attention to the "St. Eustachius," the most elaborate and largest of all Dürer's plates. The five dogs in the foreground were considered such perfect studies, and so true to nature, that they were copied as a distinct plate by two distinguished engravers.* Lucas van Leyden may be regarded as the father of the art of engraving in the Low Countries. He was a skilful draughtsman, and his work is remarkable for the arrangement of light and shade, and the gradation of tone suggesting distance in the background. The plate called "The Dance of the Magdalen" is usually considered his best; it is a very curious composition—the

* Virgil Solis and Augustino Veneziano.

Magdalen,

Magdalen, with a glory round her head, is led out to dance by a man, two musicians providing the music. In the background she is again represented following the chase. Other well known plates are "Adam and Eve driven from Paradise," and the "Ecce homo" shown. Cotemporary with Lucas van Leyden was Marc Antonio Raimondi. He also founded a school; it eclipsed the German and Dutch schools, so that from his time the Italian style of engraving became the standard of excellence, but this was not due to his own unaided talents. He was employed by Raphael to engrave many of his drawings, and, according to Vasari, Raphael sometimes directed his graver. He unscrupulously reproduced in copper Dürer's wood cuts of "The Passion," and the "Life of the Virgin," copying in Dürer's signature, and selling them as originals. I produce a print of Marc Antonio's "Marriage of Joseph and Mary," that you may compare it with Dürer's wood cut of the same. He did good work after

Raphael,

Raphael, but his best known work is the "Martyrdom of St. Lawrence," after Baccio Bandinelli, a fine composition containing fifty figures.

A series of very quaint little plates appeared about this time, in illustration of "The Praise of Folly." They were by Hans Holbein (the younger), who came to Basle with his father in 1515, where he made the acquaintance of Erasmus. I chanced on a set of impressions from these plates the other day, which I now show. Fairly successful imitations have recently been published.

During the first half of the sixteenth century, there was good work done by "The Little Masters," a title given to certain artists to denote the size and not the quality of their work. The best known are Albrecht Altdorfer, the two Behams, Heinrich Aldegrever, and Georg Pencz. I show a plate by Hans

Sebald



Sebald Beham, very perfect and cleanly engraved.

There are many conspicuous engravers belonging to the Dutch and Flemish schools. First after Lucas van Leyden, is Hendrik Goltzius. He imitated this master and Dürer also with great skill. I have here a beautiful example of his work, representing the mother of Christ holding the dead body of the Lord. To the same schools belong Lucas Vosterman (the elder), whose "Descent from the Cross," by Rubens, is well known, and Paul Pontius, whose portrait of Rubens is equally well known; and Cornelius Visscher, who, by the force of his genius, gives to quite common-place subjects a marvellous interest. I have also a fine engraving by Pontius, after Van Dyke, and Rubens' "Adoration of the Magi," by Vosterman.

The French school of engraving is represented during the sixteenth century by Jean Duvet (1485-1560), a master of

the

the graver, but whose work is mannered and artificial, and Étienne Delaune (1520-95), a well instructed and talented draughtsman. Both were goldsmiths, and the latter is better known for his jewellery than his engravings. Early in the following century, and till near the close, flourished Claude Mellan, a skilled engraver, who was peculiar in his manner of shading, his practice for the most part being to employ parallel lines only. The first truly great French engraver was Robt. Nanteuil, born at Rheims, in 1623. He was extraordinarily successful in portraiture, and being patronized by Louis XIV., engraved the portraits of most of the leading men of his time. His portrait of Cardinal Richelieu is shown. At the same time flourished François de Poilly, whose copies from great masters won him a reputation. Perhaps the only other very distinguished French engravers in the seventeenth century are Gérard Audran and Gérard Edelinck, both born

in

in the year 1640. The former is best known as the engraver of the "Batailles d'Alexandre," after Lebrun, published in the "Cabinet du Roi," the latter by copies from Raphael, Lebrun, Philippe de Champagne, &c. Both these artists were admitted to the Gobelins, under Lebrun, director-in-chief. I ought not to omit the name of Jean Pesne, whose engravings after Poussin, are as great in their way as the works they represent. In the eighteenth century the most successful French engraver was Balechou. He was born in 1715, and began by engraving portraits. His talents soon won for him a prominent place among artists, but being convicted of having detained a number of the first proofs of a plate for his own profit, he was struck off the list of the Académie, and obliged to retire to Arles, and thence to Avignon, where he engraved landscapes. Later in life he favoured historical subjects. Probably his best known work is his "Sainte Geneviève," after Vanloo. You

will

will see a print of this on the wall. The technical skill, ease, and grace are beyond all praise; yet to me the smooth roundness of the figure rather suggests a beautiful bronze than flesh and blood. I have no other examples of French line engravers to which I would direct special attention. Since Balechou's time, many plates, especially small ones, have been produced, book illustrations, graceful portraits, imitations of Watteau, &c., but it is probable there has been no advance made in the French school in pure line.

The Dutch and Flemish schools, which did so much for etching, produced no great line engravers after the middle of the seventeenth century. Even Cornelius Visscher, already alluded to, obtained his effects partly by etching. There is, however, at least one name very familiar to Englishmen among Dutch engravers of the eighteenth century, it would be impossible to pass over. I refer to Jacob Houbraken, who has

left

left us a series of admirable portraits of the English worthies of his time. In his plates also there is some etching, but essentially they are line engravings.

In Italy, the nursery of line engraving, there was an extraordinary long period during which no really great engraver appeared. Marc Antonio died in 1534, and has no worthy successor for considerably over two hundred years, *i.e.*, not till the time of Raphael Morghen (1760-1833), who has been appropriately called the father of the modern school of engraving. One of his *chefs-d'œuvre*s is before you. Compare this with the St. Geneviève and you will see the difference between the best French and the best Italian work. Guiseppe Longhi, a friend and pupil of Morghen, also did good work as an engraver. One of his best plates is from Correggio's "Reading Magdalen." Paolo Toschi, who only died in 1854, founded a school of engraving at Parma, and has left some

beautiful

beautiful plates after Raphael, and other great masters.

The first important line engraving, published in England, the work of an Englishman, was a large whole length portrait of Queen Elizabeth, which was afterwards cut down. The date of issue of this would be about 1570. In the seventeenth century the British school of line engraving was represented by Sir Robert Peake and his pupil, William Faithorne. In the eighteenth century the chief names are George Vertue, William Hogarth, two distinguished Frenchmen, Francis Vivarès (53 years in England), and Peter Charles Canot (37 years in England), the former a landscape engraver, the latter happiest in his sea pieces, Thomas Major, Sir Robert Strange, Anthony and William Walker, Isaac Taylor, William Woollett, the unfortunate William Wynne Ryland, a pupil of Le Bas, John Hall, John Browne, William

Byrne,

Byrne, Thomas Holloway, William Sharp, John K. Sherwin, James Parker, James Heath, Anker Smith, William Skelton, William Bromley, and Charles Warren. In the present century the names are even more numerous: John and Thomas Landseer, John Scott, George Noble, George and William Bernard Cooke, John Taylor Wedgwood, Cosmo Armstrong, William and Edward Radclyffe, Charles Heath, Richard Golding, John Romney, J. Webb, William H. Worthington, Charles Rolls, John Henry Robinson, and Robert Graves; Edward Goodall, James T. Willmore, and Robert Brandard, the three artists who have so beautifully interpreted Turner; James H. Watt, a pupil of the younger Heath, William Raddon, Benjamin P. Gibbon, Henry C. Shenton, and last, though far from least, George Doo.

I specially invite attention to the examples on the walls by Canot, Vivarès, John Browne, and J. K. Sherwin, and to

those

those two extraordinary portraits, "John Hunter," by William Sharp, and "Mr. Perceval," by William Skelton.

I do not know of any book to recommend to those desirous of studying line engraving. There are many monographs on the work of individual engravers and their schools, but no good general treatise. "An inquiry into the origin and early history of engraving upon copper and wood," by W. Young Ottley, 2 vols., 4to, 1816, may be consulted.



Chiaro=oscuro.



Chiaro-oscuro.

Wood engraving and metal engraving having been invented, a third method of engraving, that called *chiaro-oscuro*, in which both processes were combined, was discovered at the end of the fifteenth century. The outline of the design was engraved on a copper plate, and an impression from this was tinted and shaded by printing over it from engraved wood blocks. The earliest known engravings executed in this manner were produced by Mair, a German, in 1499. Examples of *chiaro-oscuro* prints are rare. In some the outline as well as

the tinting and shading is from a wood block—as in the work of Ugo da Carpi. The Italians brought this style to great perfection. Prints by Andrea Andreani are much sought after; some are very large prints on many sheets.



Etching.



Etching.

ETCHING resembles line engraving, except that the lines are not cut into the metal with a sharp tool, but bitten in by means of a corrosive acid. The plate, after being carefully cleaned first with turpentine and then with whitening, is coated over with a black preparation which resists the action of acid; this is technically called "laying the ground." On the black surface thus made the design is drawn with an instrument called a point, or needle; the black being scratched through and the metal exposed wherever the needle has been. A wall of wax can then be made round the plate,

and

and a mixture of acid and water poured on it; or the back of the plate may be coated over, and the plate then immersed in a bath of acid and water. In either case the dilute acid will eat into the metal only where it is exposed. After the plate has been acted upon for a few minutes it is removed, cleansed from all trace of acid with water, and wiped dry. The lines intended to be exceedingly fine, such as those indicating the remote distance in a landscape, are then painted over with so called "stopping-out varnish," and the plate is again subjected to the action of dilute acid. When another short period of time has elapsed the plate is again washed and dried, and the lines coming next in value to those already dealt with are stopped-out with varnish. Then the acid solution is again allowed to act on the plate, till the lines next in value are ready for stopping-out. Thus the plate is again and again subjected to the action of the acid, till all but the strongest lines in the

foreground

foreground have been stopped-out. Finally the ground and stopping-out varnish are removed from the plate, and a proof impression taken in the same manner as in printing from an engraved plate. The result is a print which closely resembles a pen and ink drawing. There are lines of infinite fineness and absolute strength, and every gradation between; yet every line may have been drawn with the same needle. As this process has been found somewhat tedious it has been proposed to dispense with the use of stopping-out varnish, by working upon the plate while in the bath. The plate is cleansed from all grease, and grounded all over back and front; it is then waxed to the bottom of a shallow porcelain dish, and the mixture of acid and water poured on. The etcher then, resting his hand on a piece of wood shaped like a flat rule, sets to work, beginning, if his subject be a landscape, at the foreground and ending at the horizon—that is to say he must remember that the lines first etched

will

will come out the strongest, and that the finest lines must not be put in till a few minutes before he removes the plate from the bath. This is a convenient method of etching from nature in the open air, but precision is more easily attained in the old way: when no acid is used till the drawing is completed, every line as put in stands out plainly in bright metal; whereas, when one is working on a plate in the bath, the action of the acid upon the lines drawn tends to obliterate them, and, as the etching progresses, it is almost impossible to estimate the extent to which the effect desired has been achieved. Of course, instead of either of those methods of working, the whole plate may be etched dry, and subjected to one biting only—technically called “flat biting.” If this process be adopted fine or thick lines may be obtained by using sharp and blunt and very coarse points. Finally, there is Mr. Hamerton’s “positive process.” When the etcher scratches through his black

ground,

ground, what he produces is a shining line of bright copper, thus his picture looks to him like a negative photograph—all the parts that are to be white are black—and it is difficult to estimate the strength of the work and how it will come out. The "positive process" gives a black line on a white ground. The plate is silvered, and pure white wax used for the ground; the drawing is done in the bath, and as each line is made the action of the acid turns it black.

There is yet another way of producing an etched plate. An ordinary pen takes the place of an etching needle. You draw on the bare copper with common writing ink, care being taken to protect the metal from contact with the hand, and when the drawing is completed and thoroughly dry, lay on a ground. The plate is next placed in water for a quarter of an hour, and then withdrawn and rubbed lightly with a piece of flannel.

The

The ink, having been softened with the water, comes off, together with the ground over it, and leaves the design in well-defined lines, which may be bitten-in in the usual way. This is called "Bracquemond's pen process."

A word now as to "grounds." I will give two recipes. Bosse's was made of two parts of white wax, two of gum mastic, and one of asphaltum. Callot's was two parts of white wax, two of amber or asphaltum, and from one to two of gum mastic, according to temperature, the hotter the weather the more gum mastic. A ball of ground is wrapped in taffetas silk, and a plate is heated, being held by the margin in a hand-vice. The heat must be just sufficient to melt the ground through the silk when the ball is passed over the plate. While the plate is still hot the ground is more perfectly laid by means of a dabber, made of cotton wool covered with silk. Lastly, the plate is

heated

heated again (care being taken not to burn the ground), and, with the covered side down, exposed to the smoke of wax tapers. It will be readily understood that it is quite possible to make a black liquid ground which may be laid at once with great facility. I have used such a ground laid with a brush on a cold plate. I now show you a plate I etched which was grounded in this way.

When a plate requires additional work it is well to cover it with a transparent ground, that what is already done may be seen. A transparent ground may be made of two parts white wax, one part of amber, and one of gum mastic.

As for stopping-out varnish any acid-resisting varnish will do. Here is a receipt—one part of gum mastic, two parts of white wax, eight of asphaltum, and sixty of turpentine.

The bath used for biting is commonly a

mixture

mixture of equal volumes of nitric acid and water. This will bite in fine lines in three or four minutes, and lines as dark as generally required in half an hour. Mr. Haden recommends the following mordants—for copper, one part of nitrous acid to two parts of water; and for zinc, one part of nitric acid to three parts of water. For the “positive process” the Dutch mordant is used; this is prepared by dissolving chlorate of potash in boiling water, and adding hydrochloric acid previously mixed with cold water. The proportions are—for copper, three parts of chlorate of potash, twenty of hydrochloric acid, and seventy-seven of water; and for zinc, two parts of chlorate of potash, ten of hydrochloric acid, and eighty-eight of water.

To whom belongs the honour of the invention of etching cannot be stated. The year 1496 is given, on no very good authority, as the earliest date when etching

was

was employed upon a plate, but it is probable that the first plates wholly etched were Dürer's. The date of his etching of St. Jerome* is said to be 1512; and the date of the beautiful iron plate which I show you this evening, "Christ on the Mount of Olives," is 1515. The vigour and precision displayed in this plate are not a little remarkable, considering the artist was working with unfamiliar materials.

The few examples I show from the Italian masters are not very noteworthy. The "Christ of Caprarola" is the most important, it is by Annibale Caracci. The body of the Saviour is supported by his mother, and St. John is showing the wound in the right hand to the Magdalen. Guido Reni, another great painter, was also an etcher of some note, and his plates are more numerous than Caracci's. Salvator Rosa makes a third Italian painter etcher—some of his heads are very fine.

* Not St. Jerome in his study, dated 1514, which is an engraving.

The

The French have taken no prominent position as etchers till recent times. The first French etcher was Jacques Callot (1593-1635), who drew with great spirit, especially excelling in figure drawing. Some of his compositions are singularly eccentric. The "Great Fair of Florence" is one of his best works. Next comes Claude Gélée (Lorraine), who produced a few etchings of rare quality. Cotemporary with Claude was Abraham Bosse, known as the author of what was, till lately, the only work on etching, "La manière de graver à l'Eau-forte et au Burin." He for the most part designed his own etchings, many of which are careful studies of costume. Finally, there is Antoine de Ghuy (1724-1811), who followed closely the style of Rembrandt, the best of all masters.

There are two Spanish etchers that should be noticed, both distinguished artists—José de Ribera (1588-1656) and Francisco Goya (1746-1828). Examples of

the

the etched work of either of them are scarce.

Very little has been done by the English in etched work till lately. William Hogarth (1697-1764) was an etcher and engraver before he was a painter. There are some small early etchings of his representing London life, and the large plates from his pictures are partly etched. James Barry, the R.A., was an etcher as well as a painter, and published in 1783 some remarkable etchings from his paintings in the Great Room of the Society of Arts. The three caricaturists—Thomas Rowlandson (1756-1827), James Gillray (1757-1815), and George Cruikshank (1792-1885), almost complete the list of English etchers till the art was revived a few years ago.

Wenzel Hollar (1607-1677), though he practised in England, of course belongs to the German school; he was an engraver as well as an etcher, and often finished his

etchings

etchings with the graver. Nearly all his work deserves attention, notwithstanding the extraordinary number of plates he executed. Note especially his rendering of animals' fur in many of the plates shown. Two other Germans besides Dürer and Hollar should be mentioned—Franz Edmund Weirotter (1730-71), who excelled in landscape, ruins, &c., and spent much of his time in France and Italy, and Christian W. E. Deitrich (1712-74), an able and industrious etcher, much influenced by Rembrandt, Ostade, and others of their school.

I have not left the Dutch and Flemish schools till the last out of any disrespect, on the contrary, I hold that the etched work they produced is more important than all the rest. Van Dyke (1599-1641) leads with a few choice plates, even worthy of his great reputation as a painter. Then comes Rembrandt (1606-69), without doubt the greatest master of the art the world

has

Re 1650



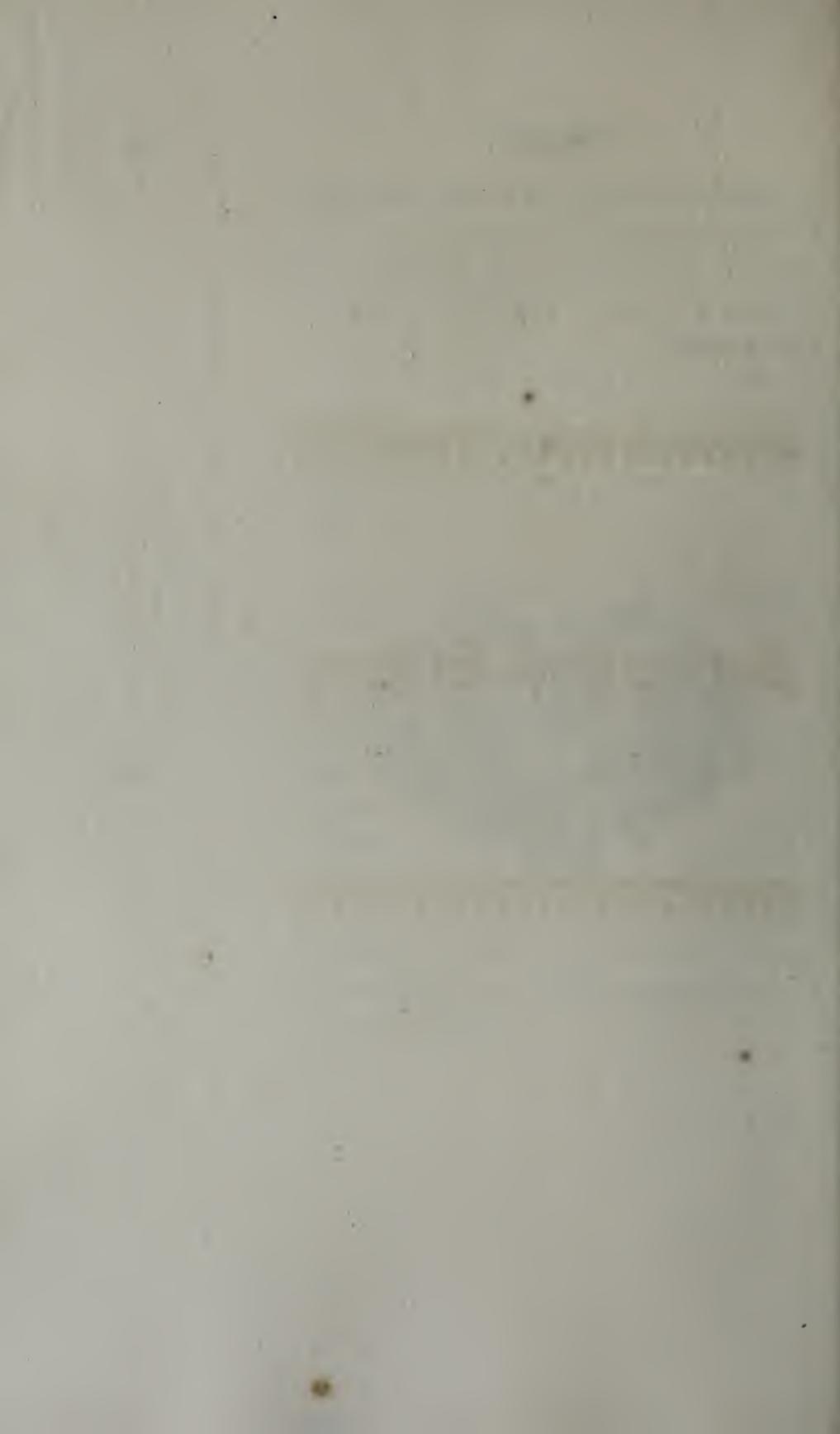
has yet seen. He had quite exceptional powers of observation and selection, a genius for light and shade, sympathy with man and all nature, enabling him to see deeper than the surface, and when he had conceived a design he was master of such absolute technical skill that he was sure of realizing his conception. I draw special attention to the portrait of the artist's old mother, a head full of character. After Rembrandt came four artists, etchers who distinguished themselves by their representations of animals, Nicolaas Berchem (1624-83), Paulus Potter (1625-54), Karel du Jardin (1635-73), and Adrian van de Valde (1639-72). The works of these all deserve attentive study; those of Van de Valde are rare. Contemporary with all these were Herman Saftleven, Antony Waterloo, and Aldert van Everdingen, etchers of landscapes of some note. Better known than these are the etchings of the three distinguished painters, Cornelis Bega (1600-64), Adrian van Ostade (1610-85),

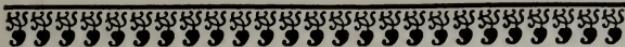
and David Teniers the younger (1610-94)—for the most part ale-house studies, peasants drinking and taking their pleasure. Jan Both, born in the same year as Ostade and young Teniers, also produced a few fine etchings (landscapes), after the manner of Claude. Jac. Ruysdael (1630-81) is an artist etcher of quite a different stamp; his work is seemingly careless, but not really so.

Of the recent revival of the art of etching in France and England I have no time to speak. That such a revival has taken place is an undoubted fact patent to all. The pioneers of the movement in France were Méryon, Lalanne, Daubigny, and Appian; in England, Seymour Haden, Whistler, Samuel Palmer, and (as a writer) Hamerton. I have brought here examples of the etched work of all these artists, and many others, so that opportunity is afforded of comparing the results of the movement in both countries.

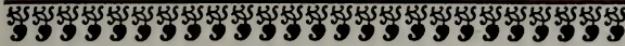
Books on etching are very numerous; I would suggest the study of two—P. G. Hamerton's "Etchers and Etching," and Maxime Lalanne's "Traité de la Gravure à l'Eau-forte."

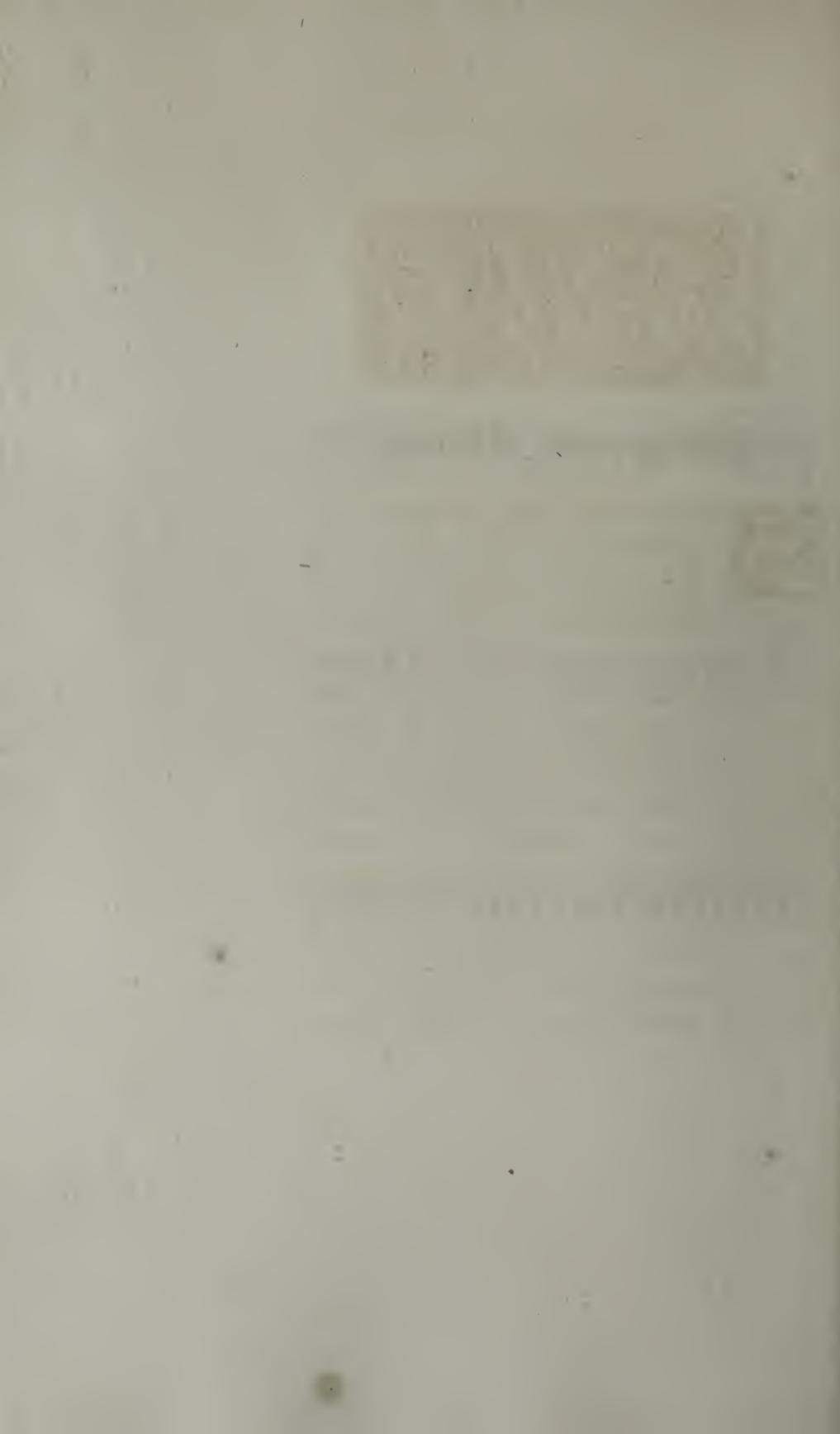






Soft-ground Etching.







Soft-ground Etching.

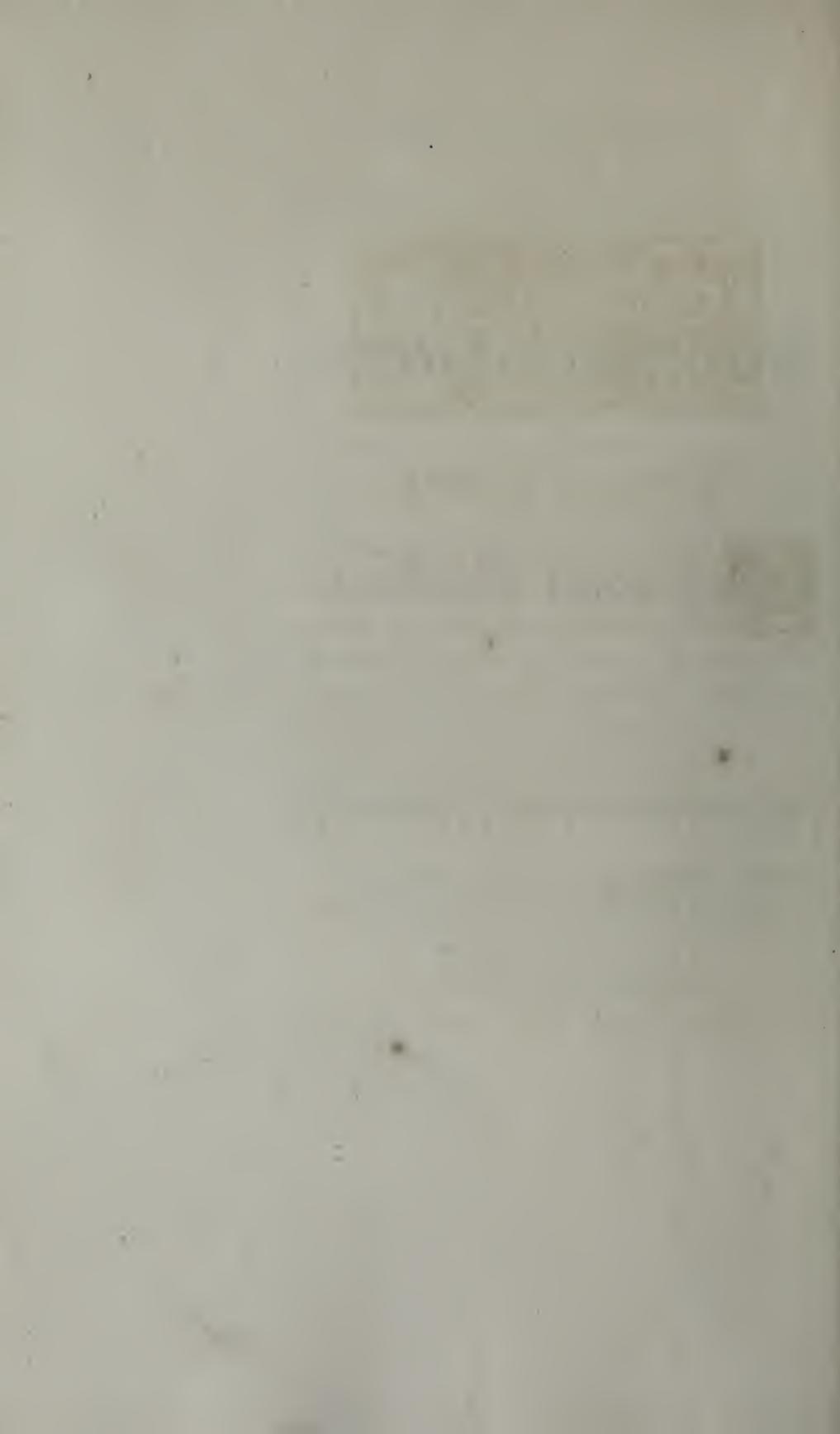
SOFT-ground etching is altogether a different art from etching as ordinarily practised. Anyone who can draw with a pencil or crayon can do it, and the resulting print can scarcely be distinguished from a drawing in black chalk or a lithograph. Ordinary etching ground is mixed with an equal quantity of tallow, the two being heated and stirred together; in hot weather the mixture should contain less tallow. The plate is then grounded and smoked in the usual way. Then take a sheet of rather rough paper, not too thick, and moistened on one side, and stretch it over the plate, turning

the

the edges round and gumming them to the back of the plate with stopping-out varnish, or any composition answering the purpose. On the paper thus stretched the subject is drawn with a pencil or crayon, and when finished the paper is peeled off. So much of the ground as will expose the copper sufficiently to represent the drawing comes away with the paper. The plate is then bitten in the usual way, in the flat or with stopping-out. A hand-rest should be used when drawing. I show a small plate etched in this manner. As all that it accomplishes can be more easily done by drawing with prepared chalk on stone and printing therefrom (lithography), this method of etching is little practised.



Dry-point Etching.





Dry-point Etching.

 HAVE said that in line engraving the design is commonly sketched in with a tool called a dry point. Of course it is quite a simple matter to complete a drawing in this way. The dry point is a steel style; and outline, modelling, and shading are put in with this one tool. The ridge of metal raised by the point, which I have told you is called a burr, may be scraped off, or the greater part or the whole may be left. Where left it catches the printer's ink in a peculiar way, and gives a softness to the line which cannot be obtained in any other manner. The

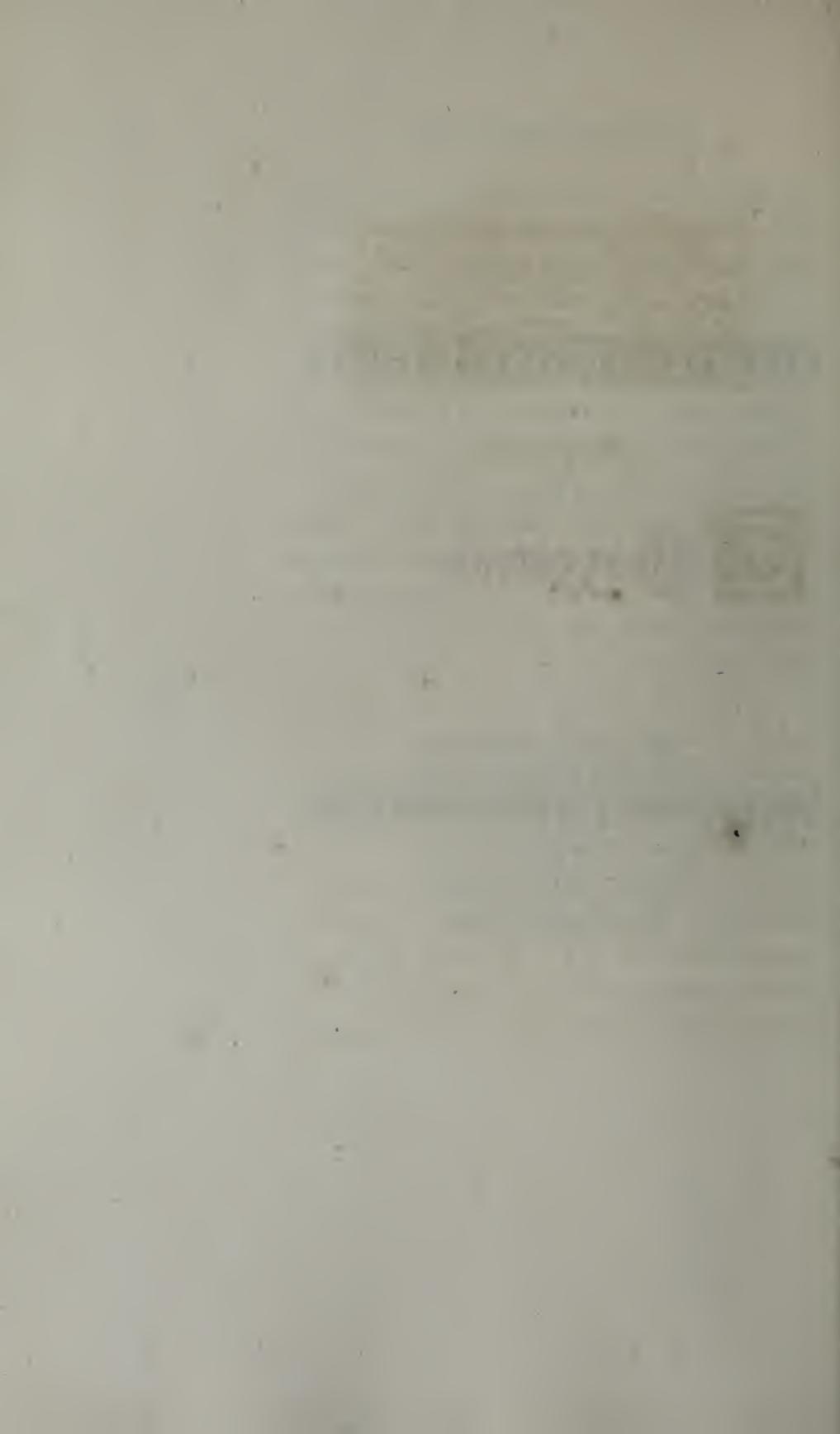
greater

greater the inclination the artist gives the point in working the more burr he will have. As the dry point lines are quite shallow, not more than about a hundred good impressions can be taken from a plate. However, as plates can now be steel-coated by galvanism, a comparatively large edition can be printed from any plate thus treated.

I show you four plates done in pure dry point. The scraper has been used but slightly. Note that the burr gives a peculiar velvety effect.



Mezzotint.





Mezzotint.

THE process called mezzotint differs completely from every other. A dark barb or ground is raised uniformly over the plate with a toothed tool, technically known as a rocker. This is a very laborious process, and to cover a large plate uniformly will occupy a skilled workman several weeks. In the present day the "rocking" of the surface is done by a special machine. After the drawing has been traced or sketched on the prepared plate, the scraper and burnisher are used to scrape and rub down the grain produced by the rocker. The lighter the effect to be produced, so much deeper is the scraping

and

and rubbing carried, and only those portions of the plate which are intended to appear absolutely black are untouched. In printing, the plate is well inked with a dabber, and then wiped clean, and the impression taken in a roller press, as in printing from an etching or line engraving.

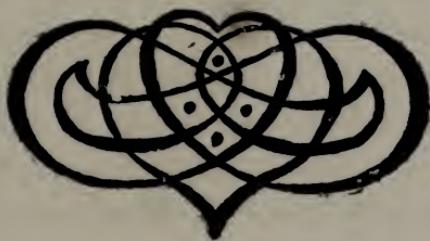
The discovery of this method of engraving was made about 1640—that is to say, in 1642 Ludwig von Siegen, a lieutenant-colonel in the service of the Landgrave of Hesse-Cassel, published a mezzotint engraving—the portrait of the Princess Amelia Elizabeth of Hesse. For twelve years Von Siegen kept his process a secret, and no one found it out. The first to whom the secret was divulged was Prince Rupert, who himself made use of the method, and introduced it to London. Prince Rupert, in his turn, made a confidant of Wallerant Vaillant, and shortly afterwards the process was known and practised in many countries. It won much attention

in Holland, but attained to the greatest perfection in this country. So much is this the case that the old Continental name for the process, "la manière noire," has given place to the "la manière Anglaise." The Prince was himself a competent artist, and produced many plates, the "Executioner of St. John," after Spagnoletto, being, perhaps, his masterpiece. Sir Christopher Wren was one of the first Englishmen to make trial of the new method of engraving, but only two plates of his are known. Vaillant (1623-77), already referred to, began by performing the humble office of "ground-layer" to the Prince, showed exceptional capacity and industry, and lived to become one of the ablest mezzotint engravers. But one other distinguished mezzotinter flourished in the seventeenth century—John Smith (1654-1719). Sir Godfrey Kneller took him into his house, and engaged him to reproduce his portraits. Two of his later plates are produced. I also show plates by most of the best known mezzotint

engravers since his time. I ask attention to the examples by John Simon (b. 1675), James Mc.Ardell (1710-65), Edward Fisher (b. 1730), Valentine Green (1739-1813), James Watson (1740-90), Thomas Watson (1743-81), Robert Dunkarton (b. 1744), John Murphy (b. 1748), and Charles Turner (1773-1857). The example of Richard Earlom shows mezzotint and line engraving in one plate; the example of Josiah Boydell, mezzotint and strong etched line in one plate. The celebrated series of plates, the "Liber Studiorum" of Turner, were produced in this way—that is to say, Turner first completed the drawing in sepia, and then etched, or got etched, all the leading outlines of the design only, and finally the shading and toning were filled in on the plate by the mezzotint process, sometimes by the artist's own hand, more commonly by engravers, but always with his scrupulous supervision of the work. When the plate was printed in warm brown ink, the effect was an impression resembling

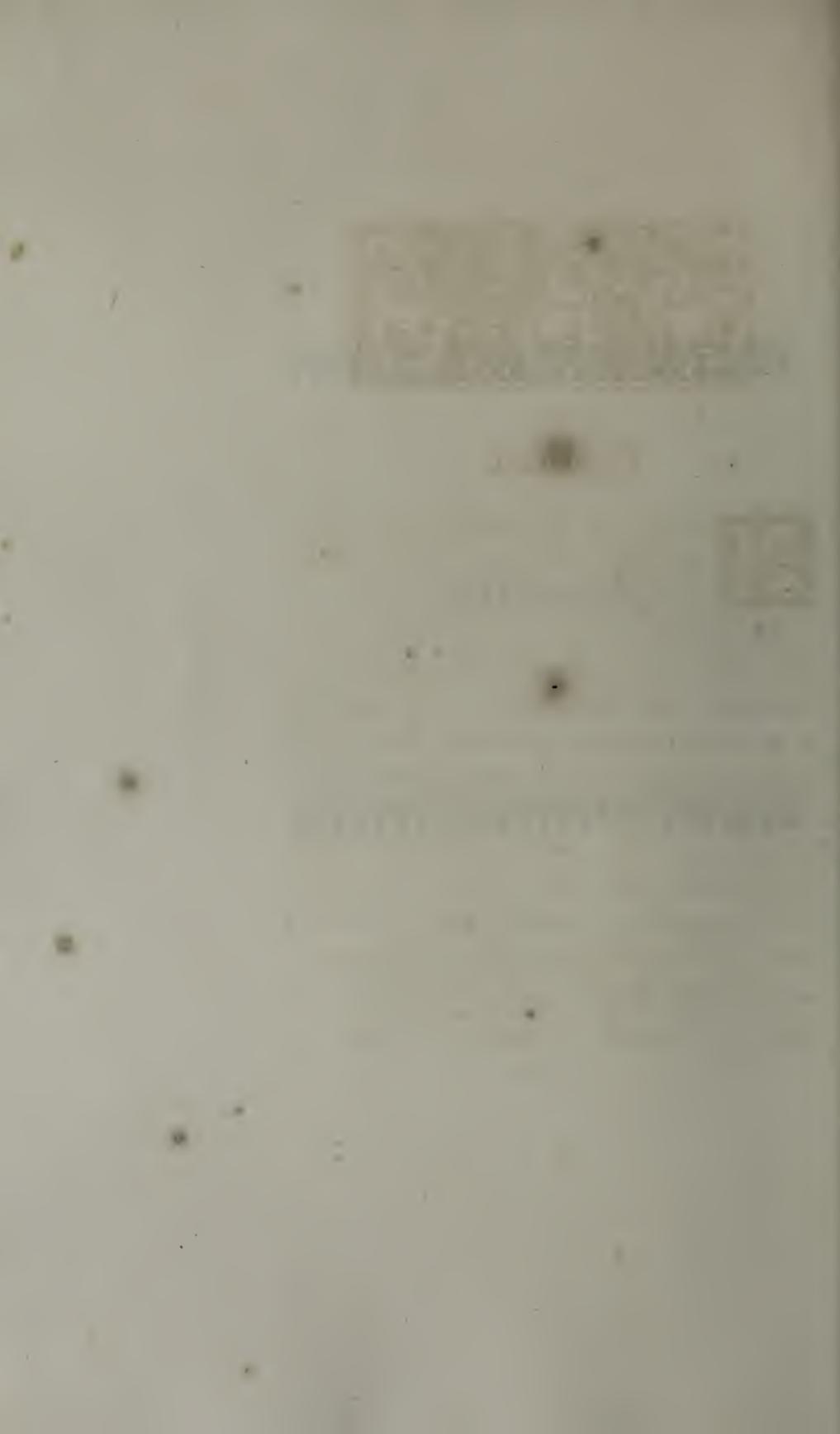
in all respects the original sepia drawing. Some of the best works of Mc.Ardell, Green, &c., were after pictures by Sir Joshua Reynolds, executed under his direction. Many of the recent reproductions of this artist's pictures, and others, are on steel, instead of copper, engraving on soft steel, to be hardened afterwards, having been introduced into England in 1819. That steel is an excellent material for mezzotints, is shown by the beautiful examples by Samuel Cousins.

The one authoritative work on mezzotint engraving and engravers is Mr. J. Chaloner Smith's treatise, published a few years since.





Aquatint.





Aquatint.

QUATINT is the process by which etchings in outline are shaded in by means of washes made of water and one or other of the strong acids. The effect produced resembles a drawing washed in with Indian ink. This method of working on metal plates was discovered by a French artist, St. Non, about 1662. The process was first kept secret. It appears to have been introduced into England by the Hon. Charles Greville, who obtained the secret from Le Prince. The French called the method *la gravure au lavis*, and, indeed, it was much improved before it acquired the name of aquatint.

Le

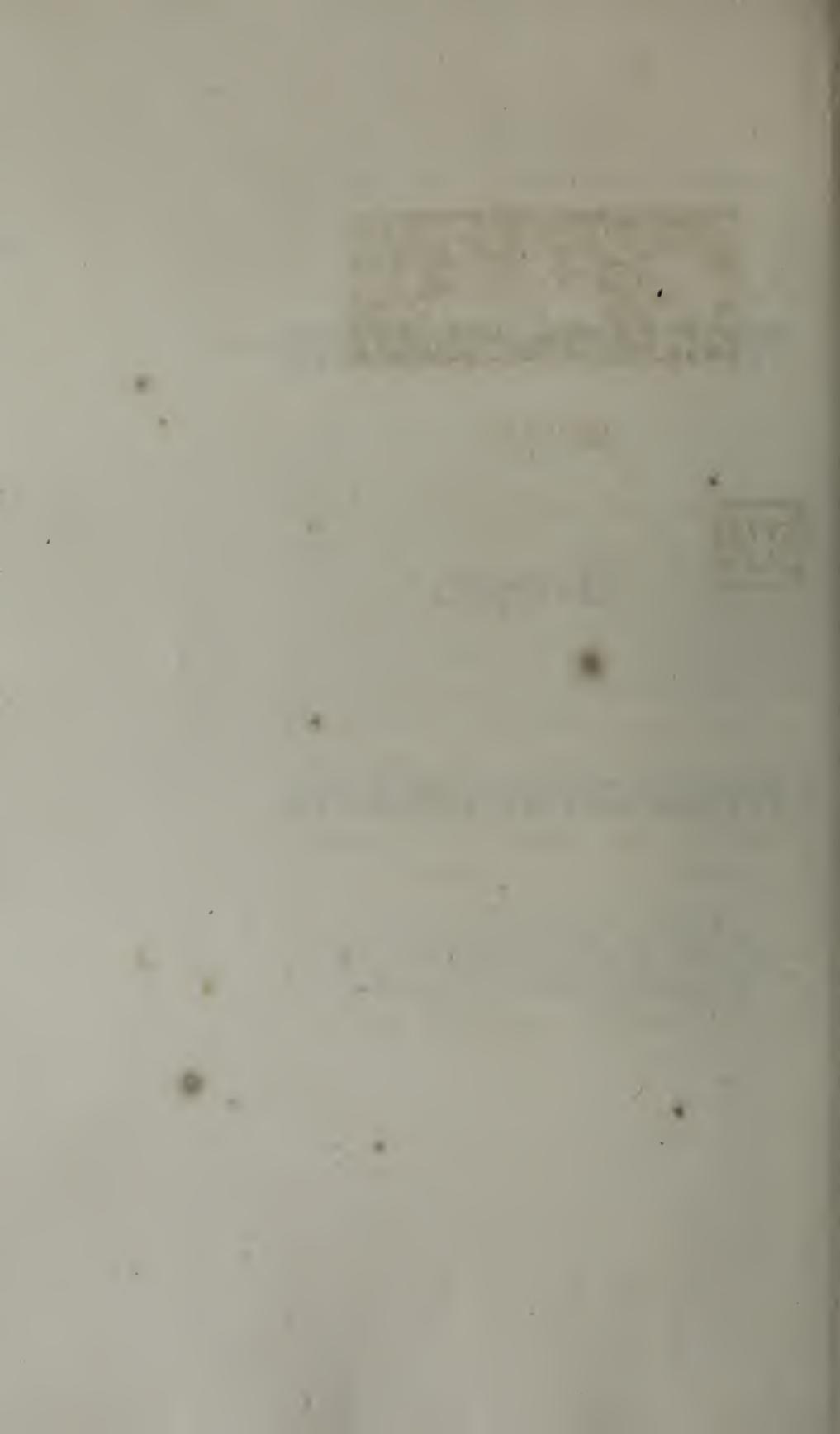
Le Prince tried to popularize it in his own country, but was not very successful. In later years Debucourt, an engraver, was more fortunate. Some of the best known productions in this style are by Paul Sandby (1732-1809).

The examples I show under this head are not of any importance as works of art. They have been selected simply to show various methods of using the process. Indeed, very few artists except Le Prince and Debucourt manifested interest in it. In this country men who were neither artists nor engravers used to aquatint plates for line or stipple engravers.

The only work on this subject is Le Prince's "Plan du Traité de la Gravure au Lavis."



Stipple.





Stipple.

THE moderate use of dots in line engraving seems to have been practised from an early period, the great masters setting the example. However, in certain engravings, the first of which were produced in the beginning of the sixteenth century, the whole work was done in dots instead of lines. The dots were made with a punch and mallet, and the method thus came to be called *opus mallei*. The name of Giulio Campagnola is identified with the introduction of the process, though it is not claimed that he was the inventor of it. This method of working probably suggested stippling,

which

which superseded it. Indeed, punching bears much the same relation to stippling that dry point does to etching. A punched plate, like a dry point plate, would yield only a few impressions, and the effect would be almost necessarily laboured and inartistic, so that it is really surprising that such a manner of engraving should have been practised, even to a limited extent, for nearly two centuries.

The stipple engraver aims at producing a plate which shall resemble in appearance a finely stippled miniature painting. The metal plate (copper used to be used exclusively, now steel is commonly employed) is cleaned, grounded, and smoked, as in preparing a plate for etching. The outline is then sketched in or transferred from a tracing. The engraver then puts in the outline in dots with an ordinary etching point. Next he puts in the shadows, and then proceeds to modelling his forms, and so on. Only enough force to completely

penetrate

penetrate the etching ground is necessary. The dots are formed in groups, and of various sizes, and it is not unusual to employ a coarser point for putting in the darker portions. When the stippler is working on a steel plate, it is found convenient to use a burin (the tool used in steel engraving) instead of an etching point. If the point is used with sufficient force to make a distinct dint in the copper, a burr is raised, and this will have to be removed by the scraper. The dots used to be arranged in what is technically called "grain," now they are in clusters. In grain each dot, visible to the naked eye, is four to five spots close together, in cluster each dot is from eight to ten spots not touching. But almost every stipple engraver of note adopted a style of dotting peculiar to himself. The dots are bitten in with acid, the same mordants being used as in biting an etching. The extent of the biting required in the various parts of the plate is regulated by stopping-out

portions

portions with varnish in the manner already explained. The dots in the parts longest bitten, the deepest shadows, will often burst into one another; and sometimes after the first two or three bitings fresh dots are added to obtain this result. After the acid has done its work, and the plate is cleaned, the engraver adds the more delicate portions of the plate with a graver, and often the whole plate is gone over with the same tool, to give strength and finish to the stipple. If any part wants lightening, it may be done with a burnisher; for removing scratches a scraper may be used. After proving the plate it may be necessary to have portions of it re-bitten. Occasionally toothed tools called roulettes are used for portions of dress, &c., and for strengthening the background; and flat tints may be produced by machine rouletting.

As in the case of the sister arts there is considerable uncertainty as to who invented

stipple



stipple engraving. François, who was born in Nancy in 1717, is generally recognised as the inventor. Demarteau, of Lièges, and Louis Bonnet, a Parisian, were early workers in stipple, and the discovery is claimed for them. Ryland, who introduced the art to this country, was a pupil of Demarteau. On the other hand it has been asserted, with some truth, that François and the French school of stipplers were, properly speaking, workers in the "manière de crayon," and that stippling (a distinct improvement on the chalk manner) was introduced and perfected by the founder of the English school of stipple engraving—Bartolozzi.

I show you four examples of the chalk manner that you may see how much it differs from work in English stipple. They are remarkably fine specimens.

The examples of stipple are all interesting: the first as an illustration of the early process (110 years before Bartolozzi came

to

to England), the next as reproductions of two of Sir J. Reynolds' portraits by the great master in stipple, and the next, one of the largest and most perfect plates ever done in pure stipple, after Van Dyke. Following are two small plates, one by Peter J. Simon, the other by James Thomson. Then there is James Heath's miniature of Opie's Mrs. Godwin, which is treated so tenderly yet with a mastery of handling unsurpassed. The next two plates, by Jones and Fogg, are put in as examples of less satisfactory work, for comparison. Picart's plates are well worth attention, especially the early proof, with the head and hands unfinished. Note also the admirable portraits of Northcote, the artist, and General Wolfe.

Full particulars about the art and practice of stipple engraving may be obtained from Mr. Tuer's recently published book on Bartolozzi and his works.

Blake's Manner.



Blake's Manner.

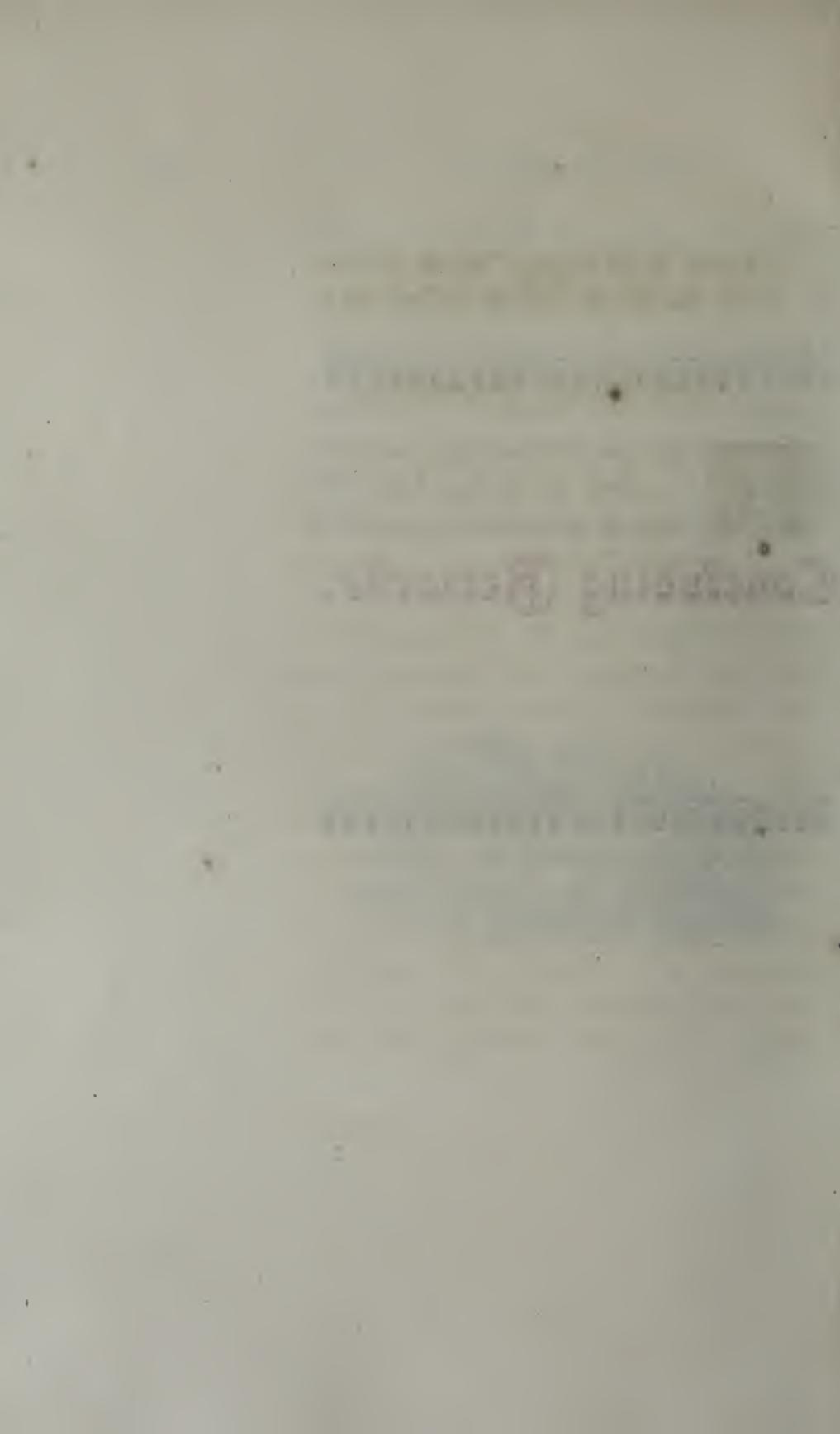
 It only remains for me to speak of one more method of engraving. It may be described as engraving after the fashion of wood-cutting on metal. So far as I know it has been adopted by Blake only. He drew on the bare copper plate with an acid-resisting liquid, such as Brunswick black, and when this was dry the surface of the plate was bitten by a mordant. The plate was then printed like a wood block, and it was the artist's custom, after the impression was taken, to colour it by hand with light washes, and the occasional use of body colour. A plate executed in this way, but without the colour, representing a drowned man and woman

lying

lying on the rocks by the sea, and eagles soaring above, is singularly effective. I show sixteen plates done in this style, the date of their issue being towards the end of the last century. The manner gives firm lines and broad flat shadows; but uncoloured impressions have an incomplete look, and appear to want the finishing touches it was intended they should have.



Concluding Remarks.





Concluding Remarks.

HERE are but two observations it remains for me to make. The one is as to the position of the English with reference to engraving. While to other nations belongs the honour of having invented the various processes, we have developed and improved almost all. Wood engraving, during the last hundred years, owes nearly everything to Bewick and his school. Line engraving has been brought to a perfection in England which is not surpassed on the Continent. As for etching, the revival is as strong a movement in England as in France, and the work of the leaders in this country will compare favourably with the best French work. In mezzotint the English have done

everything

everything but invent it; and the art of stipple engraving, but lightly esteemed abroad, has been encouraged and improved in England, so that results, scarcely deemed possible elsewhere, have been obtained.

A concluding observation is due from me as to the relative suitability of the different processes of engraving to different purposes. For book illustrations, when large editions are to be produced with some regard to economy, wood engravings are alone available. They are produced cheaply and expeditiously, they work in with the letterpress, and metal-faced copies can be multiplied *ad lib.*, so that the original blocks need not be injured or worn out. Line engraving seems best fitted for rendering classical subjects; but a large plate takes years to produce, and is very costly, so that the art cannot successfully compete with modern processes for reproducing pictures in monochrome. Still, such a beautiful art must always find

students

students and patrons, and its place cannot be taken by any other form of engraving. Etching is the modern rage—it is making advances in several directions. Certainly its capabilities are confined within no narrow limits. Haden's large plate of "Calais Pier" proves what etching can do in interpreting Turner; Waltner's beautiful copies of Fred. Walker show how the grace of figure and luminous atmosphere of this artist's exquisite work may thus be imitated; and A. H. Haig's rendering of architectural masterpieces demonstrates how well adapted the method is for this purpose also. That there is a great future for etching no one can doubt, and it is a hopeful sign that many able painters have recently turned their attention to the study and practice of etching. The great service mezzotint renders is in presenting to us unrivalled historical portraits. Kneller and Reynolds owe no small portion of their reputation for successful portraiture to the masterly reproduction of their works

in

in mezzotint. The special function of stipple engraving would appear to be the reproduction of miniatures—no other way of engraving a miniature gives anything like as satisfactory results. Though the process is tedious, a stippled plate only takes about one third the time it would take to engrave a similar plate in line.

I have previously noted that in the plates of many engravers may be found a union of two or more methods, and certainly, excellent effects are produced in this way. In truth, combining various processes often saves labour, and there is nothing contrary to the strict rules of art in the practice.



3/95

HHH-

8629

